

PEOPLE & THINGS

AFTER a flying visit to the United States, return to our "heat wave" is an indescribable relief.

The wilting man in the English street has no conception of the suffering in American cities. After more than a month of temperatures on either side of 90 degrees and often just under 100 degrees, New York is a city almost on its knees and Washington, where the humidity is Amazonian, is prostrate.

Night in New York brings no relief. The steel and concrete have absorbed so much heat during the day that even the occasional muggy breeze off the river and a drop of temperature to the middle seventies give the exhausted city no time to recover before the dawn of the next roasting day.

Go East, Young Man

INSIDE the buildings, in the passages away from the windows, the stale air, unchanged for weeks, is like fur in the lungs, and animation is suspended until, with matted hair and clinging clothes, you reach the blessed relief of an office with air-conditioning.

And air-conditioning is rare except in the most modern buildings. Of four businesses I visited which are household names in the publishing world, not one had air-conditioning and, as a result, at least two of them were closing daily at 4 p.m. Strikes for air-conditioning are increasing and it will not be long before this luxury is as much a condition of employment as a window.

For most of the year Americans are diverting, but in August partir c'est vivre un peu.

Sweet Somethings

MR. SHIGERU YOSHIDA, Japan's forthright and courageous leader during the Occupation and for the first years of peace, is a formidable statesman, but it is diverting to note the traditional Japanese naivete in his gratification with the outcome of a talk with Sir Winston Churchill which he had on his recent world tour.

In Mr. Yoshida's memoirs, now being published in "The Asahi," he reports that he made two conversational openings to Sir Winston. The first was whether Sir Winston would like to visit Japan, to which the reply was: "I would very much like to paint Mount Fuji." In the second, Mr. Yoshida referred nostalgically to the old Anglo-Japanese Alliance. "The alliance," he reports himself as saying, "was designed to counter the expansion of the Russian Empire in the Far East. Under this alliance Japan pulled the chestnuts out of the fire. I think the alliance accomplished its objective very well. When I think of the present day the situation is far more serious than it was then."

To this Sir Winston replied that as he had not been a Cabinet Minister at the time of the alliance he could not comment on its merits or demerits, but certainly if it existed today the situation in the world would be different.

I am sure Sir Winston would be happy to know that these two splendidly non-committal replies gave his visitor so much satisfaction.

Mormon Invasion

As one who has always regarded Brigham Young's Mormon migration of 1847 as one of the most stirring incidents in American history, I was especially inter-

ested, last Tuesday evening, to meet Dr. David O. McKay, the present head of the Mormon Church.

Dr. McKay is an arresting figure, who retains in his eighty-second year the piercing glance and horseman's stride of his youth. He is in England in connection with the European visit of the 400-strong Salt Lake Mormon Tabernacle Choir, whose first London concert takes place this evening at the Albert Hall; and I found that in the timing of the Choir's schedule there was something of the old rigorous pioneering spirit. "You could call it a rugged day," said Mr. Lester Hewlett, the Choir's President, as he detailed the packed twenty-four hours in the Choir's tour. "And humid too," he said, with particular feeling. (Salt Lake has the driest of climates.)

The Mormons' belief is, very briefly, that all men will be saved, but that some will be more saved than others; which is so reassuring that I am not surprised to learn that fifty million Americans listen to the Tabernacle Choir every week.



Hillary of Everest

SINCE his conquest of Everest, Sir Edmund Hillary has borne his fame with such modesty that I am not surprised to hear from New Zealand that he and his family are not finding it easy to meet the cost of building their unpretentious house—the first they have ever owned.

After his marriage, Hillary lived in a small rented house in a suburb of Auckland, but the family gave this up and now Lady Hillary and their seven-month-old son, Peter, are living in her parents' home while he is abroad discussing plans for the Antarctic expedition.

Hillary still retains an interest in the bee farm which he operates with his brother, and his wonderful book "High Adventure," published by Hodder & Stoughton, will bring in good profits, but all the funds from his lecture tours have been devoted to future expeditions.

The basic reason for Sir Edmund's slim circumstances lies in his refusal to lend his name to sponsoring commercial products or to any of the advertising and promotion schemes which make modern heroes rich men.

The Flying Soldier

GENERAL RAYMOND DUVAL, the Commander-in-Chief in Morocco, who was killed last Mon-

day while flying a light aircraft over the insurrection, was a singularly tough little man.

He had spent much of his service in North Africa, and almost all of it with African troops. In a French division, the infantry are commanded by a brigadier interposed between the divisional commander and the troops; and Duval held this post in the famous Third Algerian Division under General de Monsabert in the Italian campaign and during the liberation of Marseilles. After the war, Duval commanded in Tunisia before going to Morocco in 1949. His manner was a curious mixture of shyness and ferocity; his energy was proverbial; and he was a splendid soldier and a lovable man.

For years past he had piloted his own light aircraft into every corner and crevice of his command; and it had long been prophesied that one day he would kill himself while doing so.

Culture and Chaos

PDAUL ROGERS, last year a great Macbeth and this year a bearded Brutus, deserves a high award for moral courage. Speaking with the experience of five visits, he has accused the citizens of Edinburgh of apathy towards their Festival. They seem, he said, to have lost interest.

Mr. Rogers is half right and half wrong. The shopkeepers and, above all, the hoteliers and the boarding-house ladies extract high interest from a carnival which brings a quarter of a million visitors to the city and in three weeks turns a heavy loss into a decent profit.

But, for those citizens who have to work, the influx of tourists impedes traffic, crowds buses and trams, and makes life difficult.

There is, in fact, nothing very new in Mr. Rogers's complaint. The thoughtful Edinburgh citizen likes his culture all the year round, but not during his holiday. Since the first Festival his comment has been: "In August all the bearded intellectuals of Europe flock to Edinburgh; intelligent people leave it."

Perfidious Superman

FOR the first time, the United States are to take part in the Vienna Trade Fair which opens on September 11.

They intend to cut a considerable dash and have transformed half their 20,000 sq. ft. of floor space into a lake on which brightly painted speedboats will chase themselves round and round continuously.

Outside the American pavilion will stand a helicopter to fly visitors on a free round-trip over the city every hour.

There will be one snag to this attraction. Over the British pavilion next door, the British Petroleum Company are advertising their products with a balloon barrage.

Prententious Living

On each damask-covered table in Hollywood's newest luxury restaurant, L'Escoffier (minimum table d'hôte, five guineas without wine), there is a gold-bordered card, inscribed: "En respect de la tradition Escoffier, nous vous prions de ne pas fumer avant la fin du repas. Vous n'en appréciez que mieux votre dîner."

To foster still further the highest gastronomic traditions, particularly amongst those of their customers who can read French, the proprietors are now wondering whether to insert the words "... ou dc mastiquer la oomme."